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Chapter - I

Introduction

A. RELEVANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

With the advent of 21st century and the rapid spread of urbanization all over the world, the study of urban local government has assumed prime importance. Studies on urban development have emerged as a distinct field of study and, research particularly in the third world countries.

It is worth noting that since the advent of the First Five Year Plan and with emphasis on community development and 'Panchayati Raj', numerous studies have been undertaken on rural local self government both at the institutional level and by scholars at their individual capacities, certainly there are more rural studies than urban studies with regard to local self government. Though some important contributions have recently of late, been made to the study on the administration of urban areas, the overall picture is one of neglect and inadequacies. It is further surprising to note that majority of the works done in this sphere are undertaken by scholars belonging to the disciplines of Geography, Sociology or Economics.

Although Balurghat has got its urban fabric immediately after independence, its basic social and cultural outlook and orientation is still rural centric. Since the district of South Dinajpur has got an international boundary with Bangladesh in the east, the trans-border migration has posed unique pressure on the existing urban local body of Balurghat especially due to the growth of slums in and outskirt of the town. The town of Balurghat is developing at the phenomenal pace as an important trading centre, besides being strategically very important due to its geographical proximity with international boundary of Bangladesh. The town is historically important and culturally enriched. The rapid process of urbanization of Balurghat calls for an effective infrastructural and administrative development of the town.

Urban development encompasses a multi-dimensional process with emphasis on economic growth and modernization, as well as making provision for meeting basic needs such as health, education, transport and water supply. Planning for

integrated urban development has assumed great significance as means to achieve a balanced development of urban communities. If we look into the working of the Balurghat Municipal administration, particularly their performance keeping in view the ever growing demands of the locality, it would be seen that the administration has become a breeding ground of inefficiency and political nepotism. The proposed research seeks to carry out an in-depth study of the functioning of Balurghat Municipality and to evaluate how far this urban local body has been able to ensure good governance and participatory democracy along with sustaining development of the town. Besides, the study also wants to explore the nature of popular participation, civic body- electorate interaction and actual working of the development machinery in the light of the principle of decentralization of power.

Furthermore, the present study seek to look into the role and contribution of non-governmental organizations in the development of the city to be undertaken as there are limitation on the part of the municipal institution to finance and manage the large volume of these municipal tasks.

B. OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSED STUDY & RESEARCH GAP

An U. N. Study on world urbanization prospects in 2001 projected that the number of urban dwellers all over the world would be equal to these of the rural ones by 2007. It is clearly evident that urban settlements, particularly the small and medium towns in less developed regions are fast absorbing the increase in population mostly migrated from surrounding rural basis posing a formidable challenge to urban administration. It puts a heavy strain on the cities' infrastructure causing deficiencies in the supply of water, electricity, problems in sewerage system, health, education, transport and developing unhealthy slums and in and around the city. So far as Balurghat is concerned, the influx of people in large number from surrounding villages as well as trans-border migration have caused both infrastructural and environmental concerns and demanded expansion of the volume and range of activities of the municipality in order to ensure decent civic life for the residents of the town. Hence, one primary objective of the study is

to explore the factors that led to expansion of activities and the present state of affairs of Balurghat Municipality.

Urban environment and sustainability of cities and towns has become a very important arena of public policy making and is closely linked to the demands of good governance and efficient public management. Policy and planning for urban development though being a state subject yet, it has primarily been steered by the central government. It is clear from the five years plans that planning for urban development has been accorded only secondary importance in India's planned governments are concerned; it is relatively discouraging both from the point of view of development as well as allocation of funds for implementing different development programmes. Therefore, another primary objective of the study is to enquire into the role of the state and the municipal administration in meeting the development requirements of Balurghat as well as effectiveness and governance capability of the municipality.

Delivery of essential services and making provisions for civic amenities and community facilities for citizens is the responsibility of urban administration for which municipalities are required to mobilize funds. Central assistance for administering centrally sponsored schemes and state grants are obviously not sufficient for meeting financial requirements of the municipalities and they are supposed to mobilize resources on their own for fulfilling ever mounting challenges to urban life. The town's share of municipal revenue comes from levying local taxes of various sources. Apart from this borrowing from state government and other financial institutions as well as income from permanent assets are other source of revenue for the municipalities. Therefore the other important objective of the study is to explore the source of revenue of Balurghat Municipality and its resource generating capacity.

In the changed agenda of development, people are regarded both the means and ends of development. People centered development emphasizes the needs and rights of the people and their empowerment giving them a voice in decision making process. The stress is now laid on people's participation that goes

beyond the formal electoral process. Participation has come to be perceived as a form of grassroots democracy. The constitution 74th Amendment rightly established the grass roots democracy by way of giving a constitutional status to urban local self-government as a democratic unit of self-governance, through direct people's participation. Hence another primary objective of the study is to see to what extent real and active participation has been ensured in the governance of Balurghat Municipality for deepening and widening of democratic governance.

The proposed research seeks to carry out an in-depth study of the functioning of Balurghat Municipality and to evaluate how far this urban local body has been able to ensure good governance and participatory democracy along with sustaining development of the town. Besides, the study also wants to explore the nature of popular participation, civic body- electorate interaction and actual working of the development machinery in the light of the principle of decentralization of power

An examination of the existing literature on urban administration in general and municipal administration in particular reveals that most of the studies on municipal government have dealt with the general problems of urbanization and constraints in the delivering services to the citizens. However no significant attempt has so far been made in exploring the viability of people – centered development under urban local government as well as accomplishment of participatory governance in urban administration. The present study is aimed at fulfilling this gape in the search in urban administration in the context of Balurghat Municipality.

C. Research Question

1. What are the factors that contributed to the growth and gaining of present status of Balurghat Municipality in terms of its infrastructure expansion, development pursuits, governance and administration as well as delivery of services to the citizens?

2. How far the administration of Balurghat Municipality is attended to the modern concept of good governance and public management?
3. What are the development imperative of the municipality and how far these are fulfilled?
4. What are the sources of finance both internal and external and how far the municipality is successful in mobilization its internal resources for undertaking development programmers and delivering services to the citizens?
5. How far and to what extent has the municipality been able as an urban local government to institute participatory governance involving citizens, local committees, civil society, organizations and other local groups in administration?

D. OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE.

Any work of this nature demands an intensive survey of the existing literature in the area of the study. Keeping this in mind, a serious attempt has been made for a serious review of the available, pertinent and significant studies in this field. Besides, the list of selected Bibliography would be helpful in understanding the nature of the present study.

In India, research in the field of public administration was not very encouraging till recently in comparison to other areas of academics. This may be attributed largely to the fact that public administration, including urban administration, was not taught as an exclusive subject in Indian Universities until recently. Moreover, institutions engaged in research on administration of urban local bodies are numbered. It is therefore not surprising that there are not much research contributions in this field. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that vast amount of materials on urban issues exist which need to be fruitfully explored.

One can note that the process of urbanization is a leading world-wide phenomenon. India is no exception to that, though the process has been slow in comparison to other countries. Needless to say, academicians and researchers

have found a blooming and fertile area of study in this sphere. As such, various aspects of urban affairs are being dealt with by scholars of late. However, the progress in research in this area has been slow in comparison to its counterpart, i.e., rural administration and rural issues. Thus, there is a need for extensive and comprehensive evaluative studies of the existing set up, besides exploring untouched issues of urban administration and development.

With respect to the present study, then, a comprehensive survey of the existing literature on the related subject and issues with regard to India, West Bengal and Balurghat is a prerequisite. The researcher tried his level best to go through these as much as possible in order to get an in depth understanding of the issues to be studied, well before writing the synopsis as well as during the compilation of the dissertation. The survey of literature included (a) Historical Studies; (b) Books and Monographs; (c) Biographical Materials; (d) Government Reports, Municipal Acts, Commissions, Selected City Plans; (e) Institutional Research on Municipal Administration and Municipal Issues; (f) Papers presented at Conferences and Seminars; (g) Articles from Journals and Reports from Newspapers; (h) Ph.D. Theses on Urban Issues available in the Library of University of North Bengal; and (i) host of official and other Websites related to Urban Issues. It is not possible to lay down all the works went through by the writer. However, the worth-mentioning titles can be enumerated in brief.

HISTORICAL STUDIES:-

Let us begin the survey of literature by referring to the important historical studies on the evolution of municipal administration in India. **Hugh Tinker's** "Foundations of Local Self Government in India, Pakistan and Burma" (1954) makes an observation which is of topical interest today especially in the context of several state governments super ceding corporations and municipalities on various grounds. To quote him at length, "The first reaction of contemporary observers of local bodies at work was to condemn the whole experiment as unsuccessful or as in the case of some Indian and Burmese writers, to hold the administrative machinery responsible for the shortcomings of those who worked it. The disillusioned

supporter of representative institutions often adopts this attitude if a system of government fails, than it must be abolished and a better form of government devised. It is possible that present - day Indian and Burmese politicians, when they find local bodies unfit for the discharge of their programmes, or when they find their political opponents utilizing local bodies to build up opposition to the government may react by restricting local boards' powers, or even by abolishing them. Certain trends in present-day Indian government policy point to an increased centralization of power, and it would not be surprising to see a considerable transfer of powers from local bodies to district officials under ministerial control.....”

The next important work is **R. Argal's** “Municipal Government in India” (preface written in 1954, the date of publication not given) which was a D.Litt. thesis of Allahabad University. His study is based on the materials collected by him personally from 1946 to 1950 from state secretariats and municipal offices. He consulted the vast amount of materials that were lying in the government reports, circulars, notifications, proceedings of the Legislative Councils and Assemblies and in the judicial decisions.

From the point of view of source materials for historical studies on municipal administration, the problems faced by Argal deserve to be mentioned. He says, “The National Archives has some reports on the working of municipal government but there are wide gaps and since the reports only up to 1924 are available, one can have only fragmentary material on the development of municipal government in India and nothing more. The Municipal Manuals and Acts, which form the basic materials for such work, are generally out of print..... Had some work on the subject been published in various states, there would have been at least a framework for the development on the subject. But there was nothing to fall back upon.”

Argal, in his Bibliography at the end of his book lists numerous municipal Acts and also gives a list of judicial cases which have a bearing on the subject. Argal, however, fails to draw conclusions on the basis of his study except to suggest certain remedies like provision for a “municipal inspectorate”.

Books and Edited Books :

Neil C. Kalt and Sheldon S. Zalkind¹ have made a compilation of thirty six research reports documenting psychology's contribution to the quest for solutions to our most serious urban problems, like, prejudice, poverty, housing, education, drug use, crime, riots, and the effects of the urban environment. Taken together, the studies suggest that a variety of strategies can lessen the severity of many urban problems. For example, the findings indicate that token reinforcement can improve the school work of poor children and that public housing can be designed in ways that reduce the incidence of crime. The book presents evidence from a wide range of well designed studies, and with its emphasis on data, avoids ideological argument. It is an important source of information for researchers and the people who make or implement urban policy.

Allen G. Noble and Ashok K. Dutt² have discussed the process of urbanization in India and the requirement of planning for the urban development. The book is quite helpful due to the fact that not only Indian but also the perspectives of American scholars have also been incorporated regarding the problems of urban government.

Edward Krupart³ provides a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship of environment to human behavior and the reasons why city people act the way they do. The whole book is divided into two parts - the first deals with the idea of the city and various definitions models of urban life; and the second part concerns with the actual living in the city and its consequences, such as, crowding, noise, stress, isolation, etc. and to cope with such situations. In the concluding remarks, the author maintains that the city can be a livable place if people are encouraged in, and rewarded for, assuming control over their environment, which of course, require considerable effort and planning.

E. S. Savas⁴ has advocated for public-private partnership for providing qualitative and efficient service provision to city dwellers. He maintained, "While complete ownership and control of production and distribution of services is one extreme, complete privatisation is the other and there can be numerous

intermediate arrangements including contracting, franchising, self-help modes.”

Eenhardt, Robert B. and Joseph W. Grubbs⁵ have pointed out that local self- government would be action oriented and goal oriented. It should not make the difference between the people and the administration so that people’s participation can be ensured at the ULBs.

Evelin Hust and Michael Mann⁶ have made the attempt to identify the problems of urbanization and urban governance in India particularly in mega cities. They also highlighted the importance of public services like water supply and sanitation etc. for bringing about civic services to urban areas. **Laurence, E. Lynn Jr.**⁷ has highlighted the changing patterns of public management, both in theories and practices with the advent of twenty first century. **Osborne, Stephen P.**⁸ has highlighted the real drawbacks of public management system in urban administration and pointed out the ways that can help to overcome such drawbacks.

Tommel, Ingeborg and Amy Verdun⁹ have pointed out the examples of governance in European society at different level. This writing can open the eyes of our administrators to provide best possible services at the urban level government in big cities along with small and medium scale towns.

Philip M. Hauser and Leo F. Schnore¹⁰ have dealt with the study of urbanization from the point of view of its practical, historical, geographical, and economic as well as sociological implications. **Salomon, L.M.**¹¹ has described the basic guide line that the local self -government at all level should have to follow. **Flynn, Norman**¹² has projected the best ways to tackle the public affairs at the grass-root level, particularly at the urban self- government.

In a booklet, **P. K. Mattoo**¹³ has pleaded for reform of local bodies which have inherited a weak and insufficient administrative set-up. In his words, “A static state of existence invariably leads to decay. Local bodies have been static for such a long time that they reek of decay. There has been no serious effort by the local bodies to examine their own weakness and to boldly speak out the same. Local bodies have been persistently following the same old rot.”

R. K. Khanna¹⁴, in his book, has discussed the structure of municipal

government and organization of municipal authorities. One of his interesting contributions is in respect of defects and deficiencies in the municipal services in India. He lists 14 such defects and makes 12 recommendations for improving municipal personnel administration in India. He laments, "The weakness of our municipal administration is due, among other reasons, to the fact that the administrative personnel of municipal bodies in the country has not been always recruited by a system of merit or trained adequately in the techniques of municipal administration. Nor are men of talent attracted to the municipal service because of the low salaries paid to municipal employees in general".

Ashok Mukherjee¹⁵ has dealt with the personnel system of municipal bodies and observed that for too long, the municipal service has been treated as inferior service and hence, unable to attract superior talent. Therefore the need is to improve pay scale, allowances, leave conditions, terminal benefits, etc. of these personnel so as to attract competent and motivated young men and women in the municipal services.

Acharyulu A.S. and Sandeep Inampudi¹⁶ has aimed at analyzing the factors responsible for the spread of urban slums and tried to give suggestion for improvement of urban slum conditions. **Biju, M.R.**¹⁷ has highlighted the need for the peoples' participation at the grass root level government in order to establish good governance. The present day administration deserves the same. **Baleshwar Thakur**¹⁸ has examined the spatial aspect of the evolution of urban system by focusing upon the gradual changes in the distributional pattern of urban places. The study used two techniques: nearest neighborhood and entropy based entirely on a quantitative analysis in the field of quantitative geography.

Bhattacharjee B.¹⁹ has traced urban development in India since long back. In his writing he has divided urban development in to five phases, -- urban phase of the Harappan Culture; the period of transition and the fresh beginning of urbanization in the early historical period; urban development during the medieval period; the rise of the European settlements; and urban progress in the twentieth century. The book focused on the underlying forces that contributed to the

unchecked growth of towns and cities over centuries. To him, urbanization is a natural rather than an accidental phenomenon.

Prasad, R. N.²⁰ has highlighted the existing socio-political problems in terms of peoples' participation in ULBs.. **Bhardwaj R. K.**²¹ commented on the unsatisfactory state of affairs in urban local self government. **Shah, Anwar**²² has focused on the state of performance and the level of corruption in the administration at the grass root level in both the rural and the urban areas. By taking the advantage of the ignorance and illiteracy, people in the administration are cheating the common urban slum dwellers.

Misra, S.N²³ has stressed on the need to raise public awareness socially and politically so that the people in general can get involved in the governmental process both at the rural and the urban local bodies for delivering best possible services which is the real vision of the government. **Pardeep Sachdeva**²⁴ has dealt with the acute scarcity of finance facing the urban local bodies, besides other municipal problems. **Singh U.B.**²⁵ has covered the areas such as the demographic profile, constitutional setup, and personnel system in terms of recruitment procedures, terms and conditions, responsibilities, power, functions and duties of the municipal personnel.

Shivaramkrishnan K. C.²⁶ has opined that effective decentralization and empowerment of people through democratically elected local government can bring about development by way of establishing ward committees. He has pointed out that the gap between the availability of and the demand for infrastructure and services has widened over the years. Cities across the country are facing serious shortages of land and water. The magnitude of such mammoth problem can be resolved through the participation of the citizens in governance of cities. **Vajpeyi, Dharendra K., and Renu Khator**²⁷ have expressed that the pace of globalization has brought about the new look and new dimension towards catering to the public services.

Like other authors on municipal administration, R. K. Bhardwaj²⁸. has also commented on the unsatisfactory state of affairs. To quote him, "The way in which the people have dealt with the local bodies in India does not bring credit to the

smooth functioning of municipal administration. The social and political groups have not developed emotional attachment with local problems. Their allegiance was rather to the caste and religious interests than towards the community and local considerations with the result that there was never meaningful interaction between various groups for solving the civic problems.”

Schnore's²⁹ book is an outcome of an inter-disciplinary conference held by the Social Science Research Council in 1958. The gaining point of this book is that it seeks to promote inter disciplinary and cross cultural research, especially in the developing areas. The book not only deals with the study of urbanization from the point of view of politics and Governance, but also from historical, geographical, economical as well as sociological perspectives.

K. N. Gopi³⁰ has dealt with the problem of development of fringe areas of the rapidly growing metropolitan cities of India. He has examined the entire phenomena of the transformation of the fringe of a metropolitan settlement in the light of structural changes in the metropolitan economy and society. He has established in his study the fact that not only the land use patterns change but the entire societal structure of the fringe area is radically metamorphosed because of its strong linkage with the metropolitan economy. The process of transformation is gradual and directly related to distance and accessibility from the metropolis. In his words, “Economic integration and interdependence of the fringe community with the city is undeniable. This is evident from the commuter traffic and commodity flows between the fringe and the city. While the fringe community finds a ready market for its agricultural products in the city, it depends on the latter for all higher order goods and services”. The author takes Uppal, a fringe settlement of Hyderabad as his area of study. The author has suggested a typology of fringe settlement which is evolutionary in character for he points out that each type is characterized by a specific set of economic activities, social system and morphological features. Further, these characteristics are dynamic in nature and are susceptible to change under the compelling influences of the expanding metropolis. The pattern of fringe development is also strongly related to the prevailing social, political and economic systems.

Baleshwar Thakur³¹ has selected for his study the Bihar plain, the Chhotanagpur plateau, the lower Ganges plain, the Orissa highland region, and the Utkal Coastal plain, in order to examine the spatial dimension of the evolution of urban system. The study uses two techniques: nearest neighborhood and entropy, based entirely on a quantitative analysis in the field of quantitative geography.

U.B. Singh³² has divided the history of urban local self-government into seven phases characterized by definite aims and purposes with the first phase covering the period up to 1882 and the seventh phase starting from 1992 onwards after urban local self-government got a constitutional status with the enactment of the 74th Constitution Amendment Act, 1992. The book is highly informative and useful to those working in the field of urban management such as, administrators, policy makers and researchers.

Articles:

Blomgren Lisa et al³³ has pointed out the role of the urban government as well as the jurisdiction of the citizens in the working of the civic government. **Dixon, J. Kouzmin and N. Korac- Kakabadse**³⁴ have projected that at the small and medium towns the sole responsibility of the urban local self government is to provide basic minimum services at its fullest extent.

Peeyush Bajpai, Laveesh Bhandari³⁵ in an article, the authors has put forth a strategy for charging levy for catering the civic services on the basis of different economic status of the households. The paper stresses the need for a substantial consumer awareness campaign before embarking on any improvement programme by the civic government.

Nath Surendra³⁶ has discussed the present challenges to municipal management and dealt with the issue of strengthening the system of the management. **Bhattacharya Ardhendu**³⁷ in his article suggested participation of the private sector in matters of Municipal Services needed certain structural amendments in existing states.

Raj Mulkh³⁸ has emphasized two basic principles affecting the management of urban civic bodies – one concentrating on development through people’s participation in municipal affairs and the other, the activities of ULBs in matters of providing basic services regarding municipal activities.

Krishnanaiyer V. R.³⁹ has pointed out the basic objectives of modern urban local self government in small and medium towns. **Neogi S. K.**⁴⁰ in his article described the roles of the municipal bodies and emphasized the necessity of an integrated planning at the local level with full involvement and support of the government.

Mohanty P.K.⁴¹ has analyzed the various provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act and also made suggestions for the upliftment of the urban local bodies. **Bajpai P.K.**⁴² has analysed the necessity of peoples’ participation in urban local bodies for the asked of development and also made suggestion regarding the measures through which peoples’ participation cab be ensured at ULBs.

Banerjee Nirmala⁴³ has advocated for the cooperation of both the central and the state governments with municipal bodies in respects of functional, administrative and financial support. **Dev Raj**⁴⁴ has discussed the concept of multilevel planning and examined some plans at the local levels with their scope and perspectives. He concluded that realistic planning and effective implementation depends on sound and viable local government.

Asha Ghosh⁴⁵ expresses that local governments in Indian cities face mounting pressure to meet the needs of the growing urban corporate sector and of the emerging middleclass with demands for greater visible involvement in urban governance. **Arabi, U**⁴⁶ in his article has pointed out that the increasing population in urban areas throughout the world is the real problem before all the civic governments so far as the service delivery is concerned. It has grown mountainous at the end of twentieth century.

Saxena A. P.⁴⁷ has examined the meaning of governance in contrast to the report of World Bank and the nature of the working of civil society. This Article also

vividly examined the trend of the emerging middle class and their changing demands on the urban governments in respective areas

Dolly Arora⁴⁸ has suggested the ways to bring about reforms in the affairs of public management particularly in urban local self government in order to cope with the demands of exiting society. Even after the introduction of seventy fourth constitutional amendment act, there is some gap between the execution of government policy and public demand which ought to be fulfilled.

Darshini Mahadevia⁴⁹ has projected that a high volume of infrastructure investment in the cities of China is not just an outcome of economic growth rates maintained by the country over a long period of time, but largely because of her administrative structure wherein large cities have powers to tax more than others. To collect taxes from larger areas for providing urban services, there is a need for administrative and fiscal decentralization and devolution of urban functions to the bodies that can recover costs to some extent.

Girish Kumar⁵⁰ has spoken of the concept of public-private partnership in health services which are being increasingly adopted as an alternative option by state governments. He utters that this concept can be introduced in the small and medium towns for catering such services. **Gian Prakash**⁵¹ observes that the problems of cities have very much in common the world over. It is time thinking with the problems; bold steps are to be taken to rationalize our local bodies in matters of size and an appropriate distribution of functions with an overall regional authority taking charge of broader area-wise problems of trunk services, involving heavy capital investment and a high level of expertise.

Bijlani H. U.⁵² has envisaged that the new economic policy has opened up substantive scope for involvement of private sector in developing urban infrastructure. The paper deals with the forms of public-private partnership giving illustrations from United States Agency for International Development sponsored “The Financial Institutions’ Reform and Expansion” (FIRE).

Partha Mukhopadhyay⁵³ says that the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission is an ambitious programme to build infrastructure in India’s cities

and towns. However, the mission does not sufficiently take into account that the core problem in urban development is not lack of infrastructure but the lack of initiative on the part of the ULBs.

Mathur M. P.⁵⁴ has pointed out that the management of solid wastes continues to be an area of concern. The city governments are not well- equipped to manage the collection and disposal of solid wastes efficiently. This article also examines the management of solid waste in the country in terms of generation, collection and disposal. It also explores the promising areas of recycling and financing.

Mrutujanaya Sahu⁵⁵ in her article expresses that the governmental policies regarding urban development are unable to cope with the problem of increasing slum population particularly because of huge migration and opines that it necessitates resettlement plan with time bound actions specified and budget must be put in place to resolve towards this end. **Muhammad Mahmudur Rahman**⁵⁶ focuses on the necessity of good governance at the municipal level, particularly in the developing countries. He also highlights the obstacles towards achieving good governance. Finally he recommends 18 points recommendations to achieve the target.

Prabir C. Bhattacharjee⁵⁷ discusses some of the major issues surrounding the process of urbanization in developing countries. It reviews the broad trends in urbanization, discusses the emergence and growth of very large cities and then focuses on urban functioning. This is followed by a discussion of the contribution of rural-urban migration that contributed to urban growth.

Piyush Tiwari and Pushpa Pathak⁵⁸ have argued that there is a need for improving the basis of structural planning. Accordingly, there is a need for an analytical framework which would provide some kind of a perspective for the urban administrative system.

Pushpa Pathak and Dinesh Mehta⁵⁹ analyzes the recent trends in urbanization and migration and provides some explanations for slowing down of urban population growth and rural – urban migration in India. An attempt is also

made to project future urbanization trends keeping in mind the current macro-economic policy changes taking place in the country.

Rakesh Mohan and Shubnagato Dasgupta⁶⁰ have expressed the view that in the coming years most Asian countries will undergo similartype of fast-paced urbanization that Latin America experienced in the last half century. Despite the ills that have accompanied this process of urbanization, the world appears to have coped relatively well with the large- scale increase in urban population of recent years; it is equally possible for urbanizing economies in Asia to replicate the experience of developed economies.

Ramkrishna Nallathiga⁶¹ has stated that different of programmes and Schemes for housing of urban poor has already been launched. Besides, special programmes of housing and slum improvement have also been undertaken. Still there is a gap between policy formulation and execution. The author tries to find out the best alternative to provide best possible services to the urban poor, particularly slum dwellers.

Rajesh Gill⁶² has presented the theoretical basis on slums in terms of socio-economic ecological and psychological attributes on the one hand, and as “areas of hope” and “area of despair” on the other. This article suggests a sincere effort is required to acknowledge the issue related to urban development and adopt a different yardstick to assess their conditions vis-à-vis the urban society.

Sayed S. Shafi⁶³ in his article looks at the metropolitan cities and their problems regarding municipal functioning of various pulls, strains and distortions. Citing examples from the prime metropolis of Delhi, it advocates reworking the equations and indices which should determine the living standards and quality of life in an Indian metropolis.

E. METHODOLOGY.

The present study is primarily based on a combination of analytical and empirical method of investigation. For the purpose of data collection both primary and secondary sources were tapped. Information has been collected from official

records, documents available published and unpublished literature including reports of committees and commissions. Use of social science survey method, administration of questionnaires in the field situation has been adopted as far as practicable, for collection of perceptive supplementary data and verification of research questions. Besides, as this work is related with human responses the author met personally many persons of repute for their kind information and personal knowledge to explore the concerned past of relevant urban centers. Episodic records like manuscript, brochures and pamphlets have been critically investigated to explain the origins and reasons for a particular event, episode or period.

Method of data Collection

The study has been done in two parts. For the first part of the study, which was mainly exploratory in nature, reliance has been made primarily on books, journals, government reports and annual reports, other published and unpublished sources are supplemented by way of adopting the empirical survey method of personal interview based on structured as well as unstructured questionnaires.

For the second part of the study, the data were collected solely and completely by using the personal interview method of survey research. A structured questionnaire was administrated among the sampled respondents for information relevant for the present study.

In the second part of the study interview method has been adopted at two stages – one at the organizational level and the other at the beneficiary level. The organization is working at the community level to provide basic civic facilities to the citizens within the municipality area, at the second stage, the study has been shifted from the organizational level to beneficiary level of inquiry to see how far citizens are getting facilities and amenities to their satisfaction. Therefore, a survey research method of personal interview with a structured and unstructured questionnaire has been chosen as the principal source of data collection for this part of the study.

Location of the proposed study:

Dakshin Dinajpur district, situated in the state of West Bengal of India like other districts of North Bengal is economically backward compared to the most of the southern parts of West Bengal. The district is situated at the eastern side of North Bengal, and is poorly connected with the rest of West Bengal. It covers a wide border area attached with the international boundary of Bangladesh, receiving heavy influx of population from other states of India and the neighboring countries. This district is selected as the focus of micro study because of its geographical, political, social and cultural importance in the life of North Bengal. Furthermore, since the researcher is doing his study during his free time after completion of all his professional assignments. The Balurghat Municipality has been selected considering the time constraints for carrying on the study based on an in-depth field survey, as it is the hometown of the researcher.

Balurghat Municipality officially came into existence in 1951. This Municipality shares some common problems with other municipalities of West Bengal. It suffers from chronic financial crises, lack of town planning, overcrowded slums, inadequate public utility services, absence of healthy civic amenities etc. The frequent supersession of this municipality in the past had also created obstacles in the way of smooth functioning of this organization. The study was conducted on two parts – (1) based on material available, (2) field survey.

For the purpose of field survey, three categories of respondents -- councilors, municipal officials and citizens or the beneficiaries are selected for interview. Three different sets of schedules were used for the purpose of interviewing three categories of respondents. For the councilors, questions were framed to find out the socio-economic background of the respondents, their political affiliation and their relationship with officials and citizens. There are in all 25 councillors including chairman, vice-chairman, members of the chairman-in-council, elected to the municipality who take part in the policy making process of urban development. Barring a few independent candidates all the councilors competed in the electoral fray under the banner of mainly 3 political parties –

Trinamul Congress having 14 members Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Revolutionary Socialist Party 9 members, congress has 2 members.

The first section of the interview schedule thus includes the demographic variables including personal identification, data, such as age, sex, religion, caste, qualification, occupation and income. These variables were assumed to place the respondents in a particular position in the prevailing socio-economic milieu, thus influencing their perception, attitude, role and action in the broader social milieu where they work.

Among the officials, the sample included Executive Officers, Superintendents, Overseers, Sanitary Inspectors, water Superintendents, and some departmental heads who have some connection with development activities at the urban level. Under the present municipal Act, the State Government provides four key officers viz., Executive Officer, Engineer, Finance Officer and Health Officer in each municipality. But it was found that except Executive Officer, posts of the other officers are mostly vacant. Further it was common complaint on the part of the officials that municipal governments were running with shortage of staff. Some of officials, again, were not available as they were busy in field work.

For the officials, the first section of the interview schedule contains questions pertaining to the demographic characteristics like sex, age, sex, religion, caste, education and annual income. The second and third sections comprise questions on the officials – councilor's relationship and administration – citizen relationship

The last category of respondents is the citizens who are directly affected by urban development programmes and policies. They constitute the critical evaluators of the outcome of the policies and programmes and the rationality there of. Keeping this in mind, a sample of 100 citizens from different areas of the municipality are interviewed. The sample was drawn from the Electoral Rolls of the last municipal election on the basis of systematic random sampling procedure. This process was adopted in order to avoid bias in the selection of the citizens for the study.

The samples of citizens were drawn from 6 wards of the municipality. In the selection of the wards, the purposive method was adopted to cover developed, medium and less developed wards in the municipality under study. In addition to, interviews on the basis of schedules, informal discussions were also arranged with the intellectuals, news paper reporters and ordinary citizens and tax payers with in the municipal areas.

Interviews

The author employed the interview technique for collection of data. Open interviews had been arranged with different categories of respondents for collecting information on crucial aspects of functioning of municipal institution. Separate questionnaires were used for different categories of the respondents.

Generally, interviews lasted for one hour, but some respondents took more time. Though the author tried to make prior appointments with the respondents for taking interviews, it was not always possible to follow the schedule. The author found no difficulty in interviewing municipal officials, but elected representatives were not always available in spite of prior appointments. Some of them had little time and frequently went out of the town for the official and personal purposes. However, the mission was successful after repeated endeavors.

Before getting down to the schedules, a number of queries had to be answered as to the author's profession, address, intention in conducting the survey, the sources of finance etc. Although most of the respondents welcomed the subject of the study barring few who were skeptical about the functioning of the municipal institution. Further, the question of utility of such research work was questioned by a few officials. They expressed that such type of research work was valuable only when government took interest in the findings of the study and did something positive to improve things.

Generally, most of the respondents replied to questions in the schedules frankly in a friendly atmosphere. In course of these interviews, the respondents also gave some relevant and useful information in addition to the questions in the

schedules. Some obliged with valuable data and documents about municipal government and its functions.

Data Processing

The data processing was done manually. After collection, data were codified processed and tabulated. The data were organized through constructing frequency tables. The frequency tables were then analyzed and interpreted and presented.

Finally, some of the questions of the schedules administered to the respondents were open-ended and as such elicited, varied responses. These responses constituted vital part of the present study because here the respondents were free to answer the questions in their own way without being confined to structure responses. Thus utmost care was taken in dealing with those data and put the relevant contexts so that research questions could be answered and explained objectively. Though no formal statistical tool was used to draw inferences by way of correlating various variables, a modest attempt has been made to draw inferential explanations to a number of issues and questions relating to urban governance and development by relating different variables to each other and observing their consequences. Needless to say, the entire exercise of data processing, analyze and interpretation was done in such a way as to ensure minimization of buyers and maximization of reliability with economy in procedure.

F Plan of study

For citizens, issues at the local level are a reality of their daily lives. They are primarily concerned with the state of their local streets and drains, local parks where children can play or removal of garbage from their doorsteps. For them, the meaning of city government is its involvement at the local level with issues that are closer to people and that require citizens' response and participation. Harmonies, beauty, functional division of land into different uses are all principal considerations that govern town planning in India. Unfortunately, this provision has

remained largely unimplemented in a large number of towns and Balurghat is no exception.

The first chapter deals with an exclusive introductory note focusing on the growing importance of urban local government in small and medium town. The attempt has been made to identify the relevance and significance of the study of Balurghat municipality. Then the focus is shifted towards the objective of the proposed study and the research gap. A few research questions are framed for undertaking the study. An intensive survey has been made on the existing literature relevant to the study. The methodology followed for the study has been also explained.

The Second Chapter discusses the theoretical framework of the study. The focus is given on the origin and development of the concept of development administration. It also analyzes the changing nature of development administration over the decades since its inception after the Second World War. The chapter has also dealt with such important concepts relevant to the study as of governance, good governance, e-governance and the concept of citizen centric governance from the contemporary perspectives. Finally, the structure and functional aspects of ULB is also highlighted in brief.

The Third chapter has dealt with the history of evolution of local self government since ancient India. The administrative arrangement of local self government under colonial rule in India has also been discussed. The researcher has made a sincere effort to document the development of urban local self government under different five year plans during the post independent era. In order to cope with the changing nature of urban local self government the constitution of India has been amended on several occasions. The evolution of urban government in West Bengal has its own history which has also been discussed in brief. Finally, origin, evolution and the present structure of the local self government of Balurghat Municipality which is the main thrust area has been dealt with in detail.

The Fourth Chapter deals with the Organizational Structure, Resource mobilization and management of finance in Balurghat Municipality. Initially the organizational structure of Balurghat Municipality is outlined in brief. Then the composition and functions of Ward Committee under this ULB has been analyzed pointing out the extent of Peoples' participation in the municipal administration of Balurghat. Finally, a realistic assessment of the working of the Municipality has been undertaken in the light of the present administrative catchwords like financial management and e-governance.

The Fifth Chapter covers and in-depth analyses of the of Balurghat Municipality in areas like drainage construction and maintenance, solid waste management, provision of Education, Slum development and health care services etc.

In the Sixth Chapter an empirical study has been done on the problems of slum. It started with defining the policies taken during the different five year plans at the national level for slum development. The strategies taken by both the government of India and the government of West Bengal regarding slum improvement are elaborated. The role of urban local government in implementing these programmes and the strategy taken by Balurghat Municipality towards this end has been discussed at length. A field survey is carried out in different slum areas and the response of slum dwellers are analyzed particularly regarding the issues like sewerage and drainage cleaning, supply of drinking water, roadway services education, solid waste management etc.

The Seventh Chapter finally covers the Summary of findings and concluding observations of the study. A good number of problems are found in this municipal body during the course of study that require immediate attention. Besides, in order to develop the infrastructural development, ensuring good governance and to raise the capacity building some suggestive measures are addressed.

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